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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: CIS INFORMAL SUMMIT IN ST.PETERSBURG: TO BE
CONTINUED IN DUSHANBE

REF: A. MOSCOW 2860

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 06 12711

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G Wells. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

[1](#)1. (C) The 45-minute CIS informal summit on June 10 produced no results, but provided a forum for Putin's sidebar meetings with the Moldovan, Ukrainian and Georgian leaders. The MFA touted the summit's full roster of attendees and the Putin-Vornin meeting as noteworthy, but experts see few prospects for energizing the forum. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The CIS informal summit held June 10 in St. Petersburg was more notable for the bilateral meetings which took place on its margins than for any organizational accomplishments. All CIS leaders were present at the meeting, a rarity in the past. No formal agenda was announced before the summit meeting -- which lasted all of forty-five minutes -- and the officials and experts we've talked to were hard pressed to identify any substantive results. Lukashenko's threat to block the nomination of former chairman of the GOR Central Election Commission Aleksandr Veshnyakov as the CIS Executive Secretary was the only newsworthy item coming out of the summit.

[1](#)3. (C) Despite the paucity of results, GOR officials continue to believe that the CIS serves as a valuable forum for member states. Maksim Peshkov, Director of the MFA's Third CIS Department, told us immediately before the summit that while it had no pre-set agenda, the MFA thought that CIS reform and energy would remain priority items for the organization. He was particularly satisfied that all five Central Asian countries, including Turkmenistan -- normally considered an associate member -- planned to be represented. Viktor Sorokin, Director of the Second CIS Department, told us afterwards that it was important that the summit gave President Putin an opportunity to meet with Yushchenko, Saakashvili and Voronin separately. (Note: Putin and Yushchenko agreed on a summit in Moscow later this summer.) Neither director took Lukashenko's attempt to exert influence over the CIS seriously. "With a little bit of negotiation, he will agree on Veshnyakov," said Sorokin.

[1](#)4. (C) Echoing what we had heard elsewhere (ref A), Sorokin thought that the brief Putin-Voronin meeting was noteworthy but that without direct negotiations between Chisinau and Tiraspol, no dramatic progress toward resolution was likely. The Russians had been coy about frequent visits to Chisinau and Tiraspol by Security Council Deputy Secretary Zubakov, leading to press speculation that some breakthrough might be announced at the summit. Both directors agreed that the CIS would endure because member countries continued to believe there had to be a forum among them, regardless of the different dynamics among the countries and varying levels of interest in the organization.

¶5. (C) However, experts tell us they see little impetus for the CIS to break from its chronic malaise, which is grounded in a lack of direction and of a well-defined agenda. Even if Russia wanted to invigorate the CIS, Moscow would find it difficult to find effective partners that would share that agenda. According to Fedor Lukyanov, Editor-in-Chief of Russia in Global Affairs, Russia respected only Kazakhstan as an equal economic partner and viewed Ukraine as slipping deeper into chaos, making it unattractive as a political partner. Lukyanov said the CIS as a coordinating mechanism did not exist anymore; the group served now only as a platform where leaders who were unlikely to meet otherwise could keep lines of communication open.

¶6. (C) Comment: The CIS will meet again in Dushanbe in October for a formal summit. We are skeptical that any effort to promote reform would gain much traction. The organization is likely to continue to stumble along, if only because no leader is willing to pull the plug on this marginally useful gathering.

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